



## The Aruba Hi-Winds holds a special celebration for their 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary

It was lots of nostalgia and several bottles of Amstel Bright that brought tears of remembrance to the windsurfers and organizers taking part in this year's Hi Winds Pro Am Tournament. The races began last Thursday, and finish tonight, but on Saturday evening, faces from the past joined the newer generation in celebrating twenty years of the Aruba Hi-Winds.

A tent was set up at the Fisherman's Huts, where memorabilia from the very first years through today brought back exciting memories of when the Hi-Winds was on the PBA circuit, and brought top professional competitors from as far as Japan, often with more than 300 competing. Famous faces lined the walls, from newspaper articles of those first tournaments, along with photos of many local islanders that still compete and were there to show the march of time. Ernard "Papi" D'Lisle, who has participated in thirteen of the twenty years reminisced about those days, particularly in the mid-nineties, when the beach was filled with windsurfers and fans as far as the eye could see.

Also back for the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary was Charles Dasher, formerly a competitor and windsurfing instructor in Aruba, he recorded all the exciting action over the years, and Hi-Winds 2006 is no exception. Charles lives now in Juno Beach Florida making a living with his instructional and sport videos.

Old newspapers, outfits in which the competitors were garbed, the different tee shirts that were issued each year all brought back memories for many of the attendees at Saturday night's gathering, including Ruben Croes who began the Hi-Winds in 1987 with his good friend Anthony Block, and served as president of the organizing committee for over a decade.

A good size group of the "old timers included iMundo Alberts of the Aruba Tourism Authority. Mundo was honored by JP van den Eerenbeemt, current President of the Hi-Winds Committee with a beautiful trophy for all the years he devoted to the competition.

Everet Bongers, with the tournament since the beginning, announced that the post office had issued three new commemorative stamps for the occasion, which would go on sale Monday, July 03, just in time for the awards dinner. Two generations of Hi-Winds veterans shared quite a few memories and Amstel Bright beers Saturday night, remembering "The Good Old Days!", but new young competitors will find the fine winds and the calm waters of Aruba are still the same as they were twenty years ago!